

Talkgroup Limitations

Policies

- a) IPSC staff will establish a talk group plan for each county based on the presumptive allocation of one talkgroup per eighteen public safety system users. This presumed number might be modified following discussions with local public safety agencies before the Project Hoosier SAFE-T system for a county is operational. It may also be modified after the system has been in operation for a county for three months upon request by an agency and the IPSC staff's determination that a modification is necessary to address unique local issues shown to affect public safety. IPSC staff may also modify the number of talkgroups assigned to an agency, upon its own initiative, three months after the PHS system for the agency's county is operational. This modification will be made based upon the loading on the talkgroups, unique demonstrated public safety issues or the need to reallocate resources to ensure public safety is not affected throughout the state.
- b) IPSC staff will develop a regional and statewide talkgroup plan that addresses public safety agencies' needs for interoperability and additionally assist the agencies in dealing effectively with significant public safety issues.

1) Background

One of the strengths of the Project Hoosier SAFE-T communication system is the ability to efficiently use the scarce radio channels that are available. There could be five channels at a site; yet seven agencies with a total of ten talkgroups and 50 users could use that one site for all of their communications. While this feature is a great benefit to public safety, it has limitations.

The Motorola Astro Smart Zone OmniLink System can only have 4000 talkgroups. Therefore, the Integrated Public Safety Commission must allocate the 4000 talkgroups to public safety agencies across the state in a manner that maximizes the public safety of all Hoosiers. There are over 30,000 public safety personnel in the state. There are approximately 2300 public safety agencies. It is evident that we must develop standards for the allocation of talkgroups.

In order to facilitate interoperability and decrease the need for so many talkgroups, the IPSC is creating a number of regional and statewide talkgroups. If a major incident occurs that requires many agencies from around the area to respond, the on-scene commanders may decide to use one or more of the regional talkgroups and put some of the responders on a regional talkgroup. The creation of the regional and statewide talkgroups gives all the agencies within a county several additional talkgroups for use when necessary and addresses the need for additional agency-specific talkgroups.

Today, in most of the state, public safety agencies share a radio system. Often, the larger agencies will even dispatch some of the smallest agencies at their request. In some counties like Johnson County before it joined Project Hoosier SAFE-T system, several agencies that would respond to a major incident tried communicating on a single radio channel. They did not have the ability to separate some of the traffic onto another system. This has resulted in a great deal of confusion and inability to communicate at a very crucial time.

It would not serve Hoosiers well for the Project Hoosier SAFE-T system not to have any talkgroups available for the last agencies to come on the system.

2) Capabilities

- (a) Capabilities are described in the Policies.

3) Constraints

- (a) The Motorola Astro SmartZone OmniLink System can only have 4000 talkgroups.

4) Recommendations

The presumptive allocation of talkgroups will be based on the number of public safety users within the county. For every eighteen public safety users there will be one talkgroup allocated to the county. This is the **presumed** allocation, not the **final** allocation. IPSC staff will meet with the public safety agencies within the county as the system is being designed. An agency will have the opportunity to discuss with the staff the need for fewer or additional talkgroups. If the agency can demonstrate that it needs more talkgroups because of public safety issues unique to the area the agency serves, an adjustment in the number of talkgroups may be made by staff. Only after three months have passed since the system was put into operation for a county may a public safety agency within the

county request additional talkgroups or fewer talkgroups from staff. Staff will make the determination of the need to modify the talkgroup plan based on the loading on the talkgroups, unique demonstrated public safety issues or the need to reallocate resources to ensure public safety is not affected throughout the state.

Because the SmartZone Omnilink technology enables staff to determine the usage of the system by agency, after three months, staff may also review system performance on its own initiative and adjust the number of talkgroups within the county accordingly. Staff may also adjust the number of talkgroups based on the overall need for talkgroups statewide.

54 regional and 10 statewide talkgroups will be established by staff for agencies to use when needed. These talkgroups will be one of the prime methods for enabling interoperability.

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